
The Town of Laurel Park

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE
TOWN OF LAUREL PARK

*Happy
New Year
2024*

Commissioner's Corner

Energizing Transformations Coming to Laurel Park in 2024!

By: Commissioner Paul Hansen

Phase I construction has begun on the first 6 miles of the Ecusta Trail. Expectations are for this section of the trail to be completed by Summer's end in 2024. This section begins at the south end of Church Street in Hendersonville, runs through Laurel Park, and temporarily ends at Battle Creek in Horse Shoe.

Phase II of the design from Horse Shoe to the Transylvania County line is underway by the engineering firm Traffic Planning and Design. Grant money from US DOT and the NC DOT has been allocated for the design and construction of the entire 19.4 - mile length of the Ecusta Trail from Hendersonville to Brevard.

Another significant project that will soon be underway is the Highway 64/Brevard Road widening. The widened section will go from Blythe Street in Hendersonville to White Pine Drive in Laurel Park, where it connects to Highway 64. The project will include the addition of 4 roundabouts that will be located at Glasgow Lane, Pisgah Drive, Daniel Drive and White Pine Drive. Right-of-way acquisition by NC DOT is ongoing, with a number of structures already removed. Actual construction of the roadway is scheduled to begin in July of 2024.

The Town has been working with NC DOT on a landscaping plan to provide greenspace for the entire length of the road. Watermark Landscape Design has completed 90% of the design work, which includes plantings in the roundabouts, as well as the medians and perimeters. The plantings in each of the 4 roundabouts will represent the 4 seasons of the year.



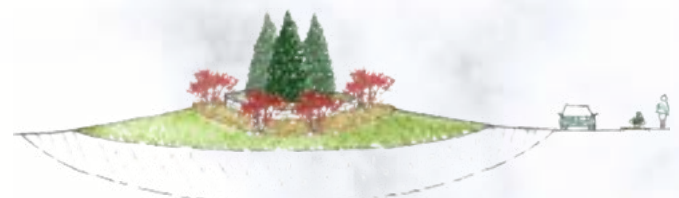
Spring



Summer



Fall



Winter

Further information about the road layout and timing will follow in the next newsletter and on the Town website.



LAUREL PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT TO HOST ALL NEW COMMUNITY CLASSES FOR 2024

- ☀️ **March 21st - CRIMINAL VS. CIVIL:** Have you ever wondered whether a situation was a criminal or civil issue? What is the process to address each situation?
- ☀️ **April 18th - Town Ordinances:** This will cover the top violations of the Town Ordinances.
- ☀️ **May 16th - Aging in Place:** How do we help? What resources are available?
- ☀️ **June 20th - Patrol Procedures:** Traffic stops, accident reports, and security checks.
- ☀️ **July 18th - Wildlife:** Turkeys, deer and bears! We cover the basics of what you need to know.
- ☀️ **August 15th - Crime Scene Investigation:** Love watching CSI TV? Get the real procedures of a crime scene.
- ☀️ **September 19th - Fraud and Scams:** How to detect a fraud or scam and how to protect yourself.

For more information and to sign up for the class, please contact Officer Erich Junger at ejunger@laurelpark.org or by phone at 828-692-9399.

INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT

FINDING BALANCE



My wife and I relocated to Laurel Park in the Fall of 2022. Prior to deciding on Laurel Park, our home search included areas within Henderson, Polk, and Transylvania counties. Unlike previous home searches when our primary criteria included quality of schools, commute times, and proximity to shopping, this time we were free from any such limiting criteria. We soon realized that the natural beauty of the area would become key criterion for our decision. Mountain views, diversity of plant species, and shade trees all came into focus as features that add value and enjoyment to a property.

We observed neighborhoods that were overrun with various invasive plants, posing a threat to the health and value of the native tree communities. As we continued our home search, the prevalence of these invasive plants became a factor in the desirability of a community.

As with physical and financial assets, natural assets, such as desirable native plants require stewardship, investment, and management. Invasive plants compete with the native species for sunlight, nutrients, and water. The aggressive nature of these competitors can overwhelm a desirable species, limiting the growth and eventual death.

Reducing the impact of invasive plants and other pests requires a diversity of tools and management practices. In agriculture, this approach is often referred to as Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The primary goal is to reduce the pest pressure, while creating conditions that favor the native or desired species.

Complete eradication of the invasive plants may sound attractive, but it is not always practical or cost effective on a large scale. A desired outcome is to reach a balance whereby the population of invasive species is below a threshold that allows the native species to grow and flourish free from competition.

~John McGregor

Invasive Vine Committee

Robert Fain

“De-Vine” Laurel Park Effort Gains Momentum

For several years the Town has been concerned about the proliferation of damage to Laurel Park’s forest by invasive vines.

The 2011 Comprehensive Parks and Greenways Plan recognized that healthy trees contribute invaluable to the beauty and character of Laurel Park, to its desirability as a great place to live, to wildlife habitat, slope stability and preservation of property values.

In 2020, The Town commissioned Arborist Bill Leatherwood to conduct a Non-Native Invasive Plant Management Project. The survey identified nearly 3,000 trees within 25 feet of the center line of the almost 42 miles of public roads in Laurel Park.

Of these trees, nearly a third were classified as either dead or in poor to fair condition. This is, of course, only a fraction of all the trees in Laurel Park that are threatened by invasive vines, most of which are located on private property.

Since then, a concerned resident provided a generous gift of \$20,000 to the Town to begin the process of mitigating this threat. Will Coffee and Todd Gizzi were employed to begin the arduous and labor-intensive work of freeing trees from the Oriental Bittersweet and English Ivy which cause most of the damage.

This year the Parks and Greenways Board formed an Invasive Species Committee to better educate residents about invasive species and to encourage individual property owners to join the Town in addressing this issue. It is estimated that it costs \$15 to save a single tree. This compares very favorably to the minimum \$2,000 expense of removing a dead or severely compromised tree.

The original gift is now fully exhausted but has been followed with a second gift of \$10,000. The donor wishes to encourage residents of the Town to support this work with their own contributions.

In addition to the generous \$20,000 gift, The Friends of Laurel Park have responded with a \$5,000 commitment. Also, all of the Town Council members have contributed financially to this effort, as have Invasive Species Committee members and other residents.

Please consider joining these residents with a contribution to this important undertaking.

Checks may be made payable to the Town of Laurel Park and annotated for Vine Removal. Because most of the at-risk trees are located on private property, any progress and work of saving and preserving our mountain forest is totally dependent upon the initiative and action of residents and property owners.

To privately contract Will Coffee or Todd Gizzi for assistance with clearing vines on your own property, please contact them directly. Todd: 269-599-7438 Will: 480-688-7366

LEAF PICKUP

Please be patient and refrain from calling Town Hall about your loose leaves.

Leaf pickup is in progress, and there is a long way to go. Please be patient - there are over 30 miles of windy roads to cover.

You may check our website for updates on what has and hasn't been collected.

Spring Brush Collection

**PLACE BRUSH BY MARCH 11-31
PICKUP BEGINS April 1**

Beginning the week of April 1st, Public Works will collect brush placed by the roadside for the spring brush collection service. **Brush placed after March 31st will not be collected.** Every effort is made to collect brush quickly, but the process takes approximately one month to complete.

- Brush cannot be picked up if it is not by the roadside. It must not protrude into the roadway or obstruct traffic in any manner.
- Limbs and branches should not be more than 3 in. diameter. Larger limbs will not be collected.
- *The Town will not collect brush from a major landscape or clearing operation*
- Brush placed at any time other than the designated fall and spring collection will not be picked up, and the resident will be notified of the violation

Bagged leaves are collected first. Please use paper bags and submit your request through the Town website or call Town Hall for collection within 3 business days.

Friends of Laurel Park

As the new year begins, we wish all residents a warm and rewarding 2024.

The Friends of Laurel Park have arranged two free winter concerts, adding to what we initiated last year.

On Saturday, January 20, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm, town musicians Joel Helfand and John Perkins will make their second appearance, featuring a good mix of old and new tunes. Then, on February 16, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm, Seth and Sara, two new musicians to Laurel Park will debut. They describe their genre as Western rock and Americana.

Both concerts will be held at the First Congregational Church on Fifth Avenue. The Friends are also working on their spring-summer concert series at Jump Off Rock and have dates from April to October.

For more information, check our website at:
www.friendsof Laurel Park.org.

**Mulch Sales Begin on
March 14th and will be
ongoing.
Stay tuned for more
details in the March
newsletter.
MARCH 14th @ 9:00 AM
Stay tuned for more details**

Tax Reminder!
**Taxes become delinquent
on Jan. 5th.
Both Laurel Park and
County taxes are paid to
Henderson County.
For questions
call 828-697-5595**



HAPPY NEW YEAR

**WE HOPE YOU'VE NOTICED HOW YOUR
TRASH SERVICE HAS CONSISTANTLY
IMPROVED OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF
YEARS!**

**WE AT TOWN HALL HAVE WORKED
HARD WITH WASTE PRO TO MAKE THIS
HAPPEN.**

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO SHOW YOUR WASTE
PRO CREWS YOUR APPRECIATION BY
TIPPING THEM, YOU MAY BRING YOUR
GIFT DOWN TO TOWN HALL AND WE'LL
BE SURE THEY RECEIVE IT!**

Bears and You



Please be aware that bears can't read calendars. As seen last year, there is no Bear Law that prohibits a bear delaying his hibernation. That means that they can still be roaming, looking for stale fruitcake (they aren't picky eaters) and Egnog that's gone south.

As always, please avoid close encounters of the furry kind by immediately bringing in any boxes of food that had been delivered to the front porch or mailbox.

Let your neighbor know if you will be gone and ask them to bring in any deliveries that you may or may not be expecting. Better yet, send it to your office if possible.

BE BEAR AWARE

-  Keep organics in a secure bin. Store in an enclosed and secure area until collection day. Keep garbage bin free of organics.
-  Do not leave garbage out overnight. Bring your bins back from the curbs after collection and rinse periodically.
-  Clean your grill after each use.
-  Manage fruit trees by picking ripe fruit.
-  Keep pet food indoors.
-  Birdfeeders can attract bears.



Valley Hill Fire & Rescue: Proper Disposal of Fireplace Ash

Improper disposal of hot coals or ashes from fireplaces and wood stoves can cause structure fires and brush fires. Coals and Ashes from the fireplace/wood stoves may seem cool, but still can have embers that can **ignite even days later**.

Valley Hill Fire & Rescue recommends following these simple tips to dispose of the ashes:

Give plenty of time for the ashes to cool in the fireplace.

Transfer the coals and ashes to a metal bucket using a metal scoop or fireplace shovel.

Remove the metal bucket to outside and away from any combustibles.

Pour water over the ashes and stir (saturate).

Give plenty of time for the ashes to completely cool before pouring the bucket out.

***Having Working Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Alarms saves lives!**











For any questions or additional information contact Fire and Life Safety Officer Chris McDowell at 828-692-2581 ext 105

Christmas Tree Collection

The Town will collect Christmas trees placed by the roadside. All trees must be placed out by **January 15th** to be picked up by Public Works. Any trees placed after January 15th will be the resident's responsibility to remove.



CALENDAR

- January 1  New Years Day - Town Offices Closed
- January 5  Trash Pickup
- January 15  Last day to place Christmas trees out
- January 15  Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Town Offices closed
- March 11  Begin placing brush out for Spring collection
- March 14  Mulch orders begin
- March 31  Last day to place brush out for Spring collection
- April 1  Spring brush pickup begins

Public Meeting Schedule

(Please check back on our website for up-to-date meeting changes prior to attending)

Town Council Work Session

January 11 @ 9:30 am
February 15 @ 9:30 am

Town Council Regular Meeting

January 16 @ 9:30 am
February 20 @ 9:30 am

Planning Board

January 9 Canceled
February 13 @ 3:00 pm

Zoning Board of Adjustment

January 11 @ 3:00 pm

Parks & Greenways Board

January 9 Canceled
February 13 @ 9:30 am

Parks & Greenways Site Meeting

January Canceled
February 22 @ 4:00 pm

Bicycle Committee

February 12 @ 3:00 pm

ABC Board at the ABC Store

January 23 @ 8:30 am
February 27 @ 8:30 am

Invasive Species committee

January 3 @ 10:00 am
February 7 @ 10:00 am

Centennial Committee

January 8 @ 11:30 am
February 12 @ 11:30 am

Bee Committee

January 16 @ 4:30 pm
February 20 @ 4:30 pm

Town Contact Information

Town Hall	693-4840
9:00 am – 5:00 pm Mon - Fri	
Police Office	692-9399
(non-emergency)	
Police Non-Emergency	697-3025
Valley Hill Fire	692-2581

Manager: Alex Carmichael
Police Chief: Bobbie Trotter
Public Works Director: Brandon Johnson
Finance Director: Kirk Medlin
Assistant to the Manager: Vacant
Town Clerk: Tamara Amin



Mayor: J. Carey O’Cain
Mayor Pro-Tem: A. Paul Hansen
Commissioners:
 George W. Banta
 Kristin Dunn
 Debra Hinson Bridges